Sunflower cultivation

449. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to promote sunflower cultivation in the country;

(b) if so, the areas and States earmarked for this purpose; and

(c) the funds allocated for this purpose and to what extent the production of sunflower is likely to be increased as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHYAM LAL YADAV): (a) No, Sir. Two Centrally Sponsored Schemes namely, National Oilseeds Development Project (NODP) & Oilseeds Production Thrust Project (OPTP) are in operation to provide fill up to the sunflower cultivation in the country.

(b) The Agro-climatically potential districts in the States of Andhra Pradesh Karnataka, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu have been selected.

(c) Under OPTP, a sum of Rs. 199 lakhs has been allocated for Sun flower during 1988-89. During 1988-89, an allocation of Rs. 1301 lakhs has been made to the States for development of suitable Oilseed crops including Sunflower under NODP.

Successful implementation of these schemes, sunflower production is expected to be raised to 8 lakh tonnes by 1988-89.

Setting up of new T.V. Stations in backward areas

450. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to instal some new T.V. Stations in the Backward Areas; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRI H. K. L. BHAGAT): (a) and (b) Establishment of 25 additional T.V. programme production centres and 155 transmitters in the backward areas, is included in the VII Plan.

Import of rice

451. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to import rice;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the names of the countries from where the rice is likely to be imported alongwith the quantity thereof; and

(d) the foreign exchange involved therein?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D L. BAITHA): (a) to (d) Government has already contracted for import of five lakh tonnes of rice from Thailand and two lakh tonnes from D.P.R. Korea. The foreign exchange involved in the import of seven lakh tonnes of rice is about Rs. 294 crores inclusive of freight.

Gold reserves in the country

452. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHODHURY: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the press report appeared in the "The Hindustan Times' dated the 27th May, 1988 wherein it has been stated that Gold Reserves are depleting at an alarming rate in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;